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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the vodun deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the bois lait. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a vodun priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a service due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

- for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called
- (114) *Don Pédro* worship. Whether or not the origin of the term is given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goave¹⁰ — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.¹¹ Thus, it is not true that the *Pédro* gods are unqualifiedly evil and the *Rada* deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at *Pédro* ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirbalais concerning the *Pédro* gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the *Pédro* "squad" are *Créole* or native gods as against the *Guinée* deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that *Pédro* was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this *Don Pedro* who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* withdrawn from his head.¹² Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "loa nan canarie—a loa in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the loa. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them nan canarie, has been performed, when they, like the other loa, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the loa, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole loa from Haiti itself.

Worship of the loa is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamalo* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.¹⁰ Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any vodun priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the loa of their own accord are believed to have given "connaissance"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.¹¹ Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damhalla, Aizan, Boun, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Petro gods it is conferred by Boun Trois Cornes, Simbi d'Eau, Gede, Osmage, Mah' Gran' Bois, and Mah' Caliou (Carrefour). Simbi on Deux Eaux and Simbi Préméd both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

764 to which orange leaves and alcohol have been added, and soap are used to bathe the corpse, though limes are substituted for orange leaves if the dead was tubercular.⁶ In earlier days caolin (white lime) — sacred in Africa — was mixed with the water, but this is no longer done. The corpse is turned on its face to permit the washing of side and back, and the body is dried with a towel, while the soiled water is either thrown into a small ravine or into a hole dug for the purpose.

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775 The corpse is next dressed in new clothing, unless the one who died owned a wardrobe which included black garments. No buttons or pins are used on new clothes, which are sewn into place, and if the body is dressed in clothing he wore while alive, the pockets are torn so that nothing can be

[198] carried away in them. Shoes were at one time put into the coffin — or sandals in the country — beside the dead, rather than on his feet, so that he would not be tempted to walk, but today in Mirebalais and the surrounding country the dead are buried barefoot or in stocking feet, since, as it was explained, "otherwise they make too much noise as they go about." Black stockings are always used. In the coffin are placed a rosary, a scapulary, soap, a comb, a handkerchief, a pipe (if the dead had been a smoker), and face powder; but no strong drink is included because, were the spirit of the dead person to become drunk, this would be dangerous; and no money, for if so much as a single sou were given the dead, he would return and take the rest of the family wealth. Similarly no food is put in the coffin, for otherwise it is believed that the ghost would be so busy eating he would never find the route to the sky. Pins are carefully excluded, because if the dead were given sharp objects, he would return to prick the family. If it is suspected that death had been caused by sorcery, and the soul of the dead may later be taken to aid in working black magic, some plants of the type called *hoholi* are placed in the coffin with the body. These plants are said to contain so many seeds that since one who comes to take the

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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêre seigneur* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

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and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeita," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

*C'est bien bon,
C'est bien bon,
Aha!*

It is very good.
It is very good.
Aha!

Card-games, such as *marisi* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *be-zique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are paused, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *lou*, the dead, and the *marisue*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

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tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest — "a real one," not a *prêt sesonne* — to chant a *libera* at the grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zouze* are danced.*

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had strong *connaisance*, steps are taken before his death to "remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

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if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched, because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

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No special purification is needed for a house where death has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

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older relatives participate in the rites as at any death; moreover, the rule *gwan' moun jai sui* 'ti moun holds only where a father, mother, grandparent, or older sister or brother is concerned.' 766

Unless the dead was known to be a sorcerer his house is not abandoned. If, unlike most of his kind, a reputed sorcerer is survived by children, they continue to live in his house; and though no gesture of marked social disapprobation is made, few persons attend the funeral and fewer still put foot inside the house afterwards, which means there is little of the habitual calling on the survivors. An abandoned house of this type is called *caille yun moun lou' gewon* — the house of a werewolf. If a stranger were to buy such a house, he would first have to "restrain" the evil spirits who continued there. Generally, however, a man will not buy land unless a diviner ascertains that no evil beings have ever been associated with it. 76

Such, in outline, are the principal rites for the dead and the outer manifestations of the sanctions which validate the cult for its followers. Fundamentally, these derive from the power which the dead wield in the world of the living — power that is held to come directly from God, who has not only given the dead all the rights of the living, but also the right to return to earth as ghosts. There are several types of dead, two of these being the *siem-siem* and the *zombi*. The *siem-siem* are ordinary ghosts; the latter, who will be discussed in the next chapter, are those whose souls have been "sold" by sorcerers and are therefore doomed to wander the earth until their destined time arrives to return to God. Still another type of dead are the ghosts of children who die before baptism, called *lutis*, who ride young horses, so that when a wild colt with a tangled mane is seen, it is said that a *lutis* has been on his back. The souls of the dead are held first to go to God in the sky, where they are condemned to purgatory or hell or permitted to remain in paradise; "It is God who creates, therefore when someone dies, he returns to Him." And as for the effect of pur- 775 •

- 775 gatory on those who are possessed by *lou* who go unharmed in fire, it is said: "It is the *lou* that go into the fire. The soul is another thing."

All agree that the dead do not possess folk in the manner of the *lou*, as might be expected from the fact that the most important rituals in the cult of the dead are not only dominated by the Church, but carried out by its priest. In the matter of consulting the dead when questions of importance for the family are involved, however, there is no consensus of opinion. The most widespread point of view holds that only those dead whose *lou* have not been removed from their heads can be summoned, and that this is done only to permit them to "go to God," so their souls may be at rest. Otherwise, "when the dead are called, it is a matter of magic, for the dead are never good and one always must fear them." And though a Malt "Bitation that is an old, old ancestor may "mount the head" of a member of the family, he would never be specially called and in most cases, if he did come, would be "restrained." On the other hand, it was recounted how during the Caco rebellion the soul of Desalines was brought into a jar and asked for his counsel. It is said, however, that he was so angered at the consistent defeats sustained by the Haitians that he struck everyone to earth and roundly scolded them for having lost the liberty with which he endowed them, departing without giving the desired advice. And since the spirits of Christophe and Toussaint are believed to be even stronger, no one had sufficient courage to summon them!

- 765 The immediate nature of the relation between the dead and the living is best seen in the conventions and attitudes surrounding the wearing of mourning, which is required of all children of the deceased, whether "legitimate" or otherwise. Black is worn twelve months for a father, eighteen months for a mother; and half-mourning — black and white — is worn for a sister, brother, cousin, uncle, or aunt. In the country, before full mourning is put on, the black cloth is
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taken to the *prof' anner* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only on Sunday mass.

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be allowed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered.

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them

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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *lou* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loup-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azito*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.⁷ The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.⁸ Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,¹⁰ and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

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Novo, Duhomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

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Baka, *loup-garous*, and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the *Mah*, Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungan* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maître d'Eaux*. With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long-light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

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Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi*. To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacra, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

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with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a hangar or a *locor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the hangar plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead. "Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *dne abandonede* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacrum of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if he is accidentally fed salt.

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he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,¹⁰ it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

[793] "A gaga who keeps a zombi may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is zombi flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about zombi, nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does eat people at Aux Cayes, I know it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining to my question that the pig had been a zombi. Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."¹¹

795 Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. Zombi meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of [796] a person's *loo* is said to be that of warning him when he is

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about to eat such food, for he feels a shudder pass through his body, and his arms become heavy, as was the case with a woman who three times dropped a piece of "beef" she was about to place in her mouth, before she realized the warning.

It can readily be seen how varied are the manifestations of evil magic. What are the forces behind them? What gives them power? What makes their unsavory ends possible of attainment? Their power comes from God, for, according to belief, everything comes from God, in the sense that God made the world as it exists. Therefore all beings are free to do anything they can contrive to do, though once dead they are called to account for their deeds. "Good and evil are two brothers; life and death are two brothers. All four come from God. They do not come from the *lwa*."

But more immediately this power comes in great measure from the dead. Before a *bocor* makes a *wanga*, he asks permission of God, the Devil, Malt' Carrefour, Malt' Cimitière, Malt' Gran Bra, and Malt' d'Eau. Baron Samedi, perhaps the most important figure among those who aid in working black magic, lives in the cemetery. Though he is a *lwa* and may possess those who appeal to him to work evil, this role is subordinate to his role as the power behind magic that kills. He controls the souls of those whose end has come as a result of magic, and when he is called at midnight, the sound of the clanking of chains is heard as he comes. He is envisaged as a dwarf. After his approval has been purchased for a projected deed, appeal is then made to Gede, for especially where it is a question of killing, though everything may have been made ready with Baron, Gede must "dig the grave." Herein lies the importance of Gede, for he is the court of last resort, the final power in matters of death.

Gede, however, is just, and even though Baron has marked a victim, Gede can refuse to concur in his decision. "If you do not merit death, Gede will refuse it," say the Haitians. It therefore sometimes comes about that though all preparations have

22 The Loa

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789 one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual sacrifices, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

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785 The mask's face must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

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789 Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "person" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possessions. This is called *maré loa*—"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.

776 Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which [152] the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

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171 Many of the loa are ancient deities, sub-founders and ancestors who bloom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wodo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Change, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. [182] They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

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195 Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

[p. 30]



4. Death Rites

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796 The community of the Haitian is one that extends far beyond his immediate family and his village, for it takes in not only the various loa but multitudinous dead relatives and ancestors. Some Haitians believe that the dead live in close proximity to the loa, in a place called "Under the Water." Others hold that the dead have no special residing place. But it is the view of many that a dead person may eventually become a loa in his own right. How this happens is not entirely clear. Under certain circumstances the spirits of the newly dead do not go quietly on their way but remain behind to annoy and harass the living. They must be buried with suitable ritual and properly placated throughout the years; otherwise their activities and influences will be unpredictable. Many of them, under special conditions, become almost indistinguishable from loa. And a few, in the course of time, become minor deities in the pantheons. The main loa of the Pétro cult, Dan Pétro, formerly was believed by some Haitians to be a houngan of the eighteenth century who had been buried without having his own loa removed from his head. There are African precedents for deified ancestors' becoming deities. Indeed, some of the great *vodouns* and *orishas* of the Dahomean and Yoruban pantheons in West Africa are believed to be deified clan ancestors or great kings.

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Whether they achieve the status of loa or not, the spirits of the dead must forever be coped with. This Haitian view of the dead is essentially that held in many parts of West Africa. Speaking of West African belief in general, Maurice Delafosse noted:

After a creature dies, only his spirit remains. It survives with the same character, the same personality, affections and hatreds as during his lifetime, but it can no longer command the vital breath. It becomes all the more powerful on escaping from the confines of its material envelope, since it no longer needs to direct and control the functions of the body, and is in itself regulated by the vital breath. . . . These spirits are all of the same nature. They are invisible but can see and judge everything that happens. They are easily angered and mete out severe punishment to anyone

Death River 31

offending them. They are also vain and capricious, can be swayed by prayers and gifts, and propitiated by sacrifices. This animistic religion . . . includes many varieties of the worship of ancestral spirits of men's ancestors and innumerable spirits of nature, all ranking as gods.¹ 775
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Another observer, speaking of the Rapiidi, the Baboula, and other related tribes of the western Congo draws quite similar conclusions:

The people of these tribes recognize a supreme deity, Nzambi, creator of all things. But this supreme spirit is too distant from men to admit active worship on their part. The basic worship is to the ancestors of the clan. The clan is in effect a community consisting of all the living and the dead descended from a common ancestor. Towards the dead it is necessary to make offerings as a mark of deference when one wishes to consult them on problems. The dead are spoken to through the chief, who uses a special drum for this purpose. The dead have the responsibility of protecting their descendants.²

Among the Bantu people of South Africa, also, the worship of ancestors is based upon the belief that when a man dies he continues to influence the lives of his relatives remaining on earth. He is as interested as ever in descendants who remain "outside on the earth," but indifferent to members of other communities unless they bear them some grudge. The characters of people who die are not changed by death. They are as prone to jealousy in death as in life, and as rancorous toward descendants who wound their vanity, flout their wishes, squander their bequests, or infringe the ancient laws and customs of their clans; but they are also as willing as ever to help those of their lineage who treat them with becoming respect and obedience.³ The affairs of mankind in general do not concern them; they are exclusively interested in their own family and tribe, and without their help and guidance their living descendants cannot hope to flourish. As long as the moral code is strictly followed, they confer blessings and abundance; but if offended by any breach of custom, they can also send drought, cattle plague, tribal or personal disaster, sickness, or death.⁴ 776
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This deeply rooted concept of the relationship of the family to its ancestors continues to motivate the Haitian in his observance of services for the dead. 769
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In addition to the ordinary dead with whom the Haitian has to deal, there are the spirits of twins, known as *marannan*. As there are feasts for the ordinary family dead, the *mangé morts*, so there are feasts for living and dead twins, the *mangé marannan*. Twins are believed to have special powers, and even when alive they are given more than usual consideration. The spirits of dead twins are especially willful and capricious, and unless properly placated they may cause illness and misfortune. Once each year, on dates fixed by local custom, special services are held for the *marannan*. 769
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^{1,2} [Footnotes appear on p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

² [Willoughby, *The Soul of The Bantu*, pp. 88-89. Cf. p. 352]

⁴ [Footnote appears on p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where poultry is sold you will find the joined marasa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marasas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marasa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is known as a *dupa* if a boy, *dupa* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as Marasa Dupu and Marasa Dupu. The patron loa of triplets is Marasa Triu. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the *dupu* or *dupu*. In the marasa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their *dupu* or *dupu*. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marasas who have followed him.

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For some Haitians the loa Marasa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marasa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marasa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

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Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

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Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *mal' etie* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

Death Rites 33

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gblin. He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are disjoined. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the *mal' sè* of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the *lwa* as well.

The rite of disposing of a deceased person of his *lwa* is called *dissoin*, or *dissoin*. The essence of it is the transference of the *mal' sè* from the head of the dead person into a special receptacle; an earthen jar called a *gou* or *pot sè*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different housegains conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *popote* [housegain] conducts the rite which retires the *mal' sè* from the body and introduces it into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *lwa*.

McIlwaine Herskovits reported:

If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong associations, steps are taken . . . "to remove the *lwa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *lwa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the consciousness of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that would go to live "under the water," rather than the *lwa*. This would appear to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome "spirit" of a dead person and the *mal' sè* who retires "under the water." Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between *lwa* and souls. On the household altar there may be some *gou*s that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain *lwa*; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 212
 cf. p. 350, category 116, Analyst
 k [Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213-214.
 cf. p. 350, category 116. -- Analyst]

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sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two categories.

Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his bounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *rafia*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the loa, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the loa, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the loa is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *di boko loa di*! Immediately the loa goes into the head of the dead person's child.

The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

"The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the malt' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the malt' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *désoisais*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a ceremony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan. The full and others, *Haitian Creole, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst*

[Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies" *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. P. 350, Cat. 116, -- Analyst]

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[539] father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh, good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as we shall not forget you."¹¹ A

[787] Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells¹² A of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."¹³ A There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ." ¹⁴ A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

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776 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the mal' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

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184 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogether, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either say

¹¹ [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *OP. CIT.*, p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

¹² [For footnote, See Category 116, p. 350. --Analyst]

¹³ [Simpson, *OP. CIT.*, p. 159. Cf. p. 359, Category 116. --Analyst]

¹⁴ [Ibid., p. 161. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

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beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes:

... Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.²⁰

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors.

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning.

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.²¹

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning.

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years.

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual.

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave
²⁰[Ibid., pp. 397-398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]
²¹[Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

Conduit'm alé oh!
Conduit'm alé djab nan Trou Fourban!
Conduit'm alé! [Ex. 91]

Take me, oh!
Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablette*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablette* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

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98 *In the Mapou Tree*

- 775 having died a virgin. The *lutin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism.¹ The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

776 The *lou-garo* (*loup-garon*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She
754 is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

776 A special form of the *lou-garo* is the *bizango*, a kind of enormous
778 dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the *lou-garo* is the *démon*, a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are sociétés of *démoris* which, like those of the *baka*, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the *mapou* tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are *Mapou Miteppe* in *Miragoane*, *Mapou Simon* in *Aux Cayes*, and *Mapou Danpisse* at *Léogane*.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zeaubeaus*—human cannibals—also gather in the *mapou* to conduct their affairs.

789 Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there
776 are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde*. It is usually obtained from a *bocor* and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The *garde corps* is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a *lou-garo*, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a *garde corps* he had prepared for a client, a *bocor* revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *wari* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.²

[754] There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called the *arrête*. It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the *arrête* is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as the *ouanga* and the *makanda*. The *arrête* bundle or object is hung in the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds. Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

¹[Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. p. 351, category 116, --Analyst]
²[For footnote, see category 116, p. 351, --Analyst]

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house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde* 789
habitation. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known
 as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect
 entire villages or valleys.

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the 789
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 product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an
 actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often,
 it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by
 the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to
 the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin*
 or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances.
 Sometimes the magic ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult
 ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent
 than those of the *arrête*. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a
 group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena
 and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect
 one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not
 solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good
 crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility.

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much atten-
 tion is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his
 household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth,
 to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special
 rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the
 one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that
 it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against
 all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves,
 the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some
 people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome [787]
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[754]
 creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the
 field.³ Or perhaps the owner will place special *arrêtes* in his garden.
 Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the
 earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its
 point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened
 end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a *piquette* may die of his
 wound. [795] •

To counteract the *maljo*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor 754
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 a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed
 together. This shirt, called a *moyo* or *many*, is worn for seven days if
 the *maljo* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly
 virulent one, however, the *moyo* will be worn as long as twenty-one

³ [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy,"
 Journal of Negro History, October, 1940,
 p. 503. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

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MANY OF HIS PORTIONS ARE OF A MYSTICAL AND semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone. 759
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One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a *loa* in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the *lutin*, the *djablesse*, and those who were buried possessed of *mystères*. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared. 775 ●

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act. 775
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The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt. [263]

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist. [264]

102 *In the Mapou Tree*

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754 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."⁴

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715 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

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184 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zambam in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

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754 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried, only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

* [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p 243. Cf p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

In the Mapon Tree 103

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

Nans Léogane

Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-bananel

Ahoho wye-oh!

In Léogane

They tie the zombie with banana straw!

That is all, wye-oh!

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'dme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'dme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreaul Albert Moreaul Albert Moreaul Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthen jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

104 *In the Mapou Tree*184
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others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

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The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!

Maringouin pinga zombie!

Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!

Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!

Mosquito beware the zombie!

Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!

Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!

Chaingadaing, teau teau!

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!

Chaingadaing, colocol!

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!

Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!

Chaingadaing, teau teau!

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!

Chaingadaing, colocol!

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!

Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing!

Dancing and Dance Drama 135

rites to break the tension. The name appears to have come from the word "Caribbean." 535

Magie: A dance accompanying a magic-making ritual.

Pousin: A dance accompanying the making of a poucin.

Calchasse: A dance accompanying the calachash ritual, for the dead. [764]

Dahomey: One of the principal dances of the Vodoun group, named after Dahomey.

Bombache: Another rest dance, from northern Haiti. Carried over into secular dancing, it has become the commonplace Bombache.

Bouleversé: From northern Haiti.

Manché, or Maniba: A dance associated with Dahomey rites, accompanied by percussion music played on small drums hung around the neck.

Assour: A dance accompanying rites for the assour drum.

DANCES CONNECTED WITH CONGO AND PÉTRO RITUAL

Pétra, or Dos Pétra: The principal dance of the Pétra cult.

Kitta Mouillé: The "Wet Kitta," danced for the Simbi family of loa, patrons of rain and the spring. Sometimes called Danse Simbi. On rare occasions the Kitta Mouillé is accepted as Vodoun rather than Pétra.

Kitta Chéché, or Séché: The "Dry Kitta," danced for loa of the Kitta group other than the patrons of the spring. Sometimes identified with Vodoun rites rather than with the Pétra.

Bumba, or Limbo: Named after Congo tribes.

Moundougue: A dance for the loa Moundougue. Named after a tribe in the northern Congo.

Salongo, or Kinen: From southwestern Haiti. Salongo is the name of a tribe in Angola.

Bambara: Named after the Bambaras of northwestern Africa.

Congo Loangue, or Congo Franc: Named after Loango in the Congo.

Congo Masonne: The "Masonic" Congo dance, known also as Congo Larose and Congo Créole. Some informants believe the dance originated in a hounfor called Société La Rose, from which it derives one of its names.

Pastorel: A Congo rest dance.

Moussandi: A battle dance.

Mouchéché: A dance of northern Haiti for paying a debt to a loa.

Mayoyo: This dance is nearly extinct.

Masonne Pétra: The "Masonic" dance of the Pétra rites.

DANCES ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE VODOUN GROUP

Ibo: Named after the Ibo people of Nigeria and used in rites for the Ibo family of loa.

Kango or Caplion: Named after West African tribes.

DANCES OF THE JURA GROUP

Jaka, or Martinique: Danced on the occasion of Low Prayers, when the spirit of a newly deceased person has been sent on its way. It is also danced on various columbia occasions, and sometimes at the special request of a loa or an ancestor. [764] [775]

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14. Songs of Bravado and Boasting



Among the secular songs are many which have boasting, bravado, or challenges as their central theme. Usually this kind of song is playful in tone, though sometimes there may be a serious or even an ominous undercurrent. Often the challenges are directed toward, or concern, *djabs* and *démons*. Just as often they involve persons of great prestige and power, perhaps the president himself. These songs say, in effect, "Who's afraid of the *lou-garo*?"—or of the president, or of the demon of such-and-such a mountain, as the case may be. Sometimes the bravado motif is implicit, but as often as not the singer challenges the world to take him before some feared personage, human or supernatural, and see what will happen.

In one such song, the singer boasts that he is ready to be conducted before a fearful and malevolent deity named Jean Zombie. As though to assure the listeners that he is in his right mind, the challenger emphasizes that he has not been drinking anything intoxicating and is perfectly sober:

Rwol Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
 Rwol Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
 M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fè tintin!
 Devan boufor moin conduit'm allé!
 Jean Zombie oh wi' wa conduit'm allé!
 M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fè tintin! [Ex. 119]

Rwol Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
 Rwol Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
 I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!
 I am at my boufor, take me to him!
 Jean Zombie, oh wi' wa, take me to him!
 I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!

Another song challenges the community to take the singer to face the president—right into the president's parlor. The fact that the president

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Secret-Society Songs 169

A brief song identifies by name a man who has participated in a Vin-bindingue affair:

Y'r é so' Cimila mangé ti moune yol
Y'r é so' Cimila mangé ti moune yol [Ex. 127]

Last night Cimila ate little children!
Last night Cimila ate little children!

A Calinda song speaks more tangentially of its business. It refers to doing "washing," a very special kind of washing that requires no bluing:

Waille waille waille, savonné sans métdé 'digol
Waille waille waille, savonné sans métdé 'digol [Ex. 128]

Waille waille waille, wash without bluing!
Waille waille waille, wash without bluing!

And a Zeubeaup song complains that a ouanga (a black-magic bundle) has been swallowed by a snake. It seems to specify that some of the members of the group are zombies, the animated dead:

L'Arrahaye nous là nous là!
L'Arrahaye nous là nous là!
L'Arrahaye, coulté valé ouanga moin!
Ti ga'çons mes zeubeaups, waille waille mes zeubeaups!
Ti ga'çons mes zeubeaups, waille waille mes zeubeaups!
Ti ga'çons mes zeubeaups, waille waille mes zombies!

Arrahaye I was there I was there!
Arrahaye I was there I was there!
At Arrahaye a snake swallowed my ouanga!
Young men, my zeubeaups, waille waille my zeubeaups!
Young men, my zeubeaups, waille waille my zeubeaups!
Young men, my zeubeaups, waille waille my zombies!

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[The Vodoun Pantheon]

324 Appendix 1: The Pantheons

776 AZAMON LACROIX, or BARON LACROIX. Spoken of as "chief" of the cemetery, the one who plants the cross over the grave.

BARON POUVIL, or POUVIL (Baron Dost)

BARON SAL (Baron Earth, or Dirty Baron)

BARON CHITA. The Baron who sits on the graves.

BARON TIKALÉ

• [775] AZAKA MIND, or ZAKÉ MIND. Herskovits reports that Azaka Mind is the name of the stream which Dahomeans believe all the dead must cross.¹⁰

COUNSIN ZAKA. The peasant Zaka, special patron of the country farmer and the people of the mountains. He is always portrayed as wearing the blue denim costume of the peasant, carrying the woven peasant knapsack called an *afon counon* and a cocomacque stick, and smoking a clay pipe. Persons possessed by Cousin Zaka are dressed in this way, and they speak in the manner of the mountain man, a style that is heard only in the most remote communities.

MINISTRE ZAKA, or MINISTRE ZAKA. An aspect of Cousin Zaka. Ministre Zaka is a sort of Minister of Agriculture and a patron of peasant farmers.

SI AZAKA. The wife of Ministre Zaka.

AZAKA TONNIRE, or TONNÉ. The Azaka who brings thunder and rain.

AZAKA BAINGO BAINGO. One of the Azaka family.

MARASSA. The loa of twins. The Marassa family of deities are in a special category, somewhat apart from other spirits. In an important Vodoun service, for example, there are invocations to the loa in general, to the Marassas, to the family ancestors, and to God.

MARASSA DOGU. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a boy.

MARASSA DOGA. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a girl.

MARASSA BLANC. Patron of white twins.

MARASSA TROIS. Patron of triplets.

MARASSA QUINÉ. Patron of twins when one is a boy and one a girl.

MARASSA QUAT'. Patron of quadruplets, or of two consecutive sets of twins.

MARASSA BOSS (Marassa of the Woods). He is considered an "unbaptized" or "untamed" loa, and very savage. He likes sweets and never eats salt.

MARASSA DEUX, or MARASSA CINQ. Patron of consecutive twins and triplets.

MARASSA CAISSE (Marassa of the House). This one eats salt.

[771] LOKO ATTINO. He is usually pictured as the protector of the hounfor, or cult temple, and as the keeper of the altar (*pe*). In Dahomey, Loko is a deity of the Sky pantheon and a son of the divine Mawu and Lisa.¹¹ He is still remembered in the Asara (Dahomey) cults of Cuba. He is also called Sindé or Singé.

LOKO ATTINOULÉ. Said to be Loko Attino's wife.

LOKO ADJICO, or DJICO. A member of Loko Attino's family.

LOKO DJIKRE. A brother of Loko Adjico (Djico + *frère*).

LOKO DJIKRO

LOKO TOKAMPWIZO

LOKO DAHOMÉ

LOKO BANYÉ

Ton Loko

¹⁰ [Ibid., p. 280. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

¹¹ [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 108-109. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.

-- Analyst]

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Maly' GRAND CHIMIN (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba.

MAKANDA. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Pôro rather than a Dahomé loa. [77/5]

MAMBO ÇAÇA

TIJAN DANTON (Ancient Tijan)

WHYDAH WALD. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

ZO. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin. [77]

CHACRA

CHAL, or CHANGER. Known also among the Lucumi cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Changers mentioned by Herskovits. [77]

CHANCE LÉLÉ

CHONJAN

PAPA DAHOMÉ

PIERRE BASSICO. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter. [77]

PIERRE DAMBALLA, DAMBARRA, or DAMBADA. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

PIERRE WALD. Related to Whydah Wald.

POULA, or FOULA. This name is probably a tribal designation.

SABATA. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Sagbata is the so-called small-pox group of deities of Dahomey.

SALA. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Ezilie Fréda family.

SILIBO GWÉRO. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient all-founder. [77]

SILIBYA

TAUREAU

TI ÇAK. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin. [77]

SIMBA. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simba brothers.

SIMBI DLEAU. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dleau usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the houndor. [823]
[822]
[778]

SIMBI KITTA

SIMBI YEWÉDAN, or SIMBI NAN DÉ ZLAUX (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

GRAND SIMBA. The parent of Simba, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

SIMBI TROU ZIN (Simbi of Three Islands)

SIMBI MACAYA

SIMBI GRAND BON (Simbi of the Forest)

²²[Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples*, pp. 71-74. Cf. P. 354, Category 116.--Analyst]

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

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769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.³¹

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not.
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782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revived by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious zombies); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.³²

31. See Herkowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mans, Herkowitz, Doraisvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.